

1 A MEMORIAL

2 RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF GENIZAROS IN NEW MEXICO HISTORY AND
3 THEIR LEGACY.

4
5 WHEREAS, indigenous captivity and servitude were common
6 in frontier society that became New Mexico; and

7 WHEREAS, various indigenous peoples, including Apache,
8 Dine (Navajo), Pawnee, Ute and Comanche, were captured; and

9 WHEREAS, indigenous people became part of New Mexican
10 communities and households through capture in war, kidnapping,
11 trade fairs, punishment for crimes, adoption, abandonment and
12 the sale of children; and

13 WHEREAS, baptismal records reveal that at least four
14 thousand six hundred one captive indigenous persons were
15 baptized between the years 1700 and 1880, becoming part of
16 Spanish, Mexican and territorial households; and

17 WHEREAS, numerous primary source records document the
18 captivity, presence and experience of indigenous people
19 displaced in this way, including marriage records, court
20 cases, wills and censuses; and

21 WHEREAS, the experiences of captives, while varied,
22 included being raised and serving within households, and
23 sometimes remaining in a captor's home for a lifetime; and

24 WHEREAS, the practice of taking Indian captives lasted
25 through the Mexican and into the American period in New

1 Mexico; and

2 WHEREAS, there were many terms to describe Indian
3 captivity and servitude in New Mexico, including "cautivos",
4 "criados", "coyotes" and "famulos" but the most common used
5 prior to 1821 and into the Spanish colonial period was the
6 term "genizaro"; and

7 WHEREAS, the term "genizaro" derives from the Turkish
8 word "yeniceri" or "janissary", terms used to describe
9 Christian captives who, as children, had been forcibly
10 abducted, traded and trained as the nucleus of the Ottoman
11 empire's standing army; and

12 WHEREAS, genizaro families could be found in various
13 communities throughout the colony, including the major
14 villages of Albuquerque, Santa Cruz de la Canada, Santa Fe
15 and El Paso del Norte; and

16 WHEREAS, in the mid-eighteenth century, many genizaros
17 were again relocated strategically at the edges of Hispanic
18 communities, thus providing both an initial line of defense
19 against raiders and the foundation for communities such as
20 Abiquiu, Belen, Carnuel, Las Trampas, Ojo Caliente, Ranchos
21 de Taos, San Miguel del Vado and Tome; and

22 WHEREAS, by 1776, genizaros made up at least one-third
23 of the entire population of the province; and

24 WHEREAS, genizaros and their descendants have
25 participated in all aspects of the social, political,

1 military and economic life of New Mexico during the Spanish,
2 Mexican and American periods; and

3 WHEREAS, eventually the migration patterns of cautivos
4 and genizaros paralleled that of all New Mexicans with
5 communities extending southward to El Paso del Norte (Ciudad
6 Juarez) and northern Chihuahua, Mexico, as well as northward
7 to Colorado and beyond; and

8 WHEREAS, the direct result of the Indian slave trade was
9 the emergence of generations of racial and cultural mixtures
10 often referred to in the colonial period with terms such as
11 coyotes, colores quebrados, lobos and mestizos; and

12 WHEREAS, many New Mexicans can trace their ancestry to
13 these indigenous peoples;

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
15 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the important role of genizaros and
16 their descendants have had in the social, economic, political
17 and cultural milieu of New Mexico and the United States be
18 recognized; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate recognize the
20 existence and importance of this indigenous group and the
21 presence and importance of its descendants today; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
23 transmitted to the office of the state historian. _____